

The President's Radio Address

December 7, 2002

Good morning. This weekend is the deadline for the Iraqi regime to fully disclose to the U.N. Security Council all of its weapons of mass destruction. Disarming that regime is a central commitment of the war on terror. We must, and we will, prevent terrorist groups and outlaw regimes from threatening the American people with catastrophic harm.

Saddam Hussein has been under a duty to disarm for more than a decade, yet he has consistently and systematically violated that obligation and undermined U.N. inspections. And he only admitted to a massive biological weapons program after being confronted with the evidence.

Now the U.N. Security Council and the United States have told Saddam Hussein: The game is over. Saddam Hussein will fully disarm himself of weapons of mass destruction, and if he does not, America will lead a coalition to disarm him.

As the new inspections process proceeds, the United States will be making only one judgment: Has Saddam Hussein changed his behavior of the last 11 years and decided to cooperate willingly and comply completely, or has he not?

Inspections will work only if Iraq complies fully and in good faith. Inspectors do not have the duty or the ability to uncover terrible weapons hidden in a vast country. The responsibility of inspectors is simply to confirm evidence of voluntary and total disarmament. Saddam Hussein has the responsibility to provide that evidence, as directed, and in full.

The world expects more than Iraq's cooperation with inspectors. The world expects and requires Iraq's complete, willing, and prompt disarmament. It is not enough for Iraq to merely open doors for inspectors. Compliance means bringing all requested information and evidence out into full view to show that Iraq has abandoned the deceptions of the last decade. Any act of delay or defiance will prove that Saddam Hussein has not adopted the path of compliance and has rejected the path of peace.

Thus far we are not seeing the fundamental shift in practice and attitude that the

world is demanding. Iraq's letters to the U.N. regarding inspections show that their attitude is grudging and conditional. And in recent days, Iraq has fired on American and British pilots enforcing the U.N.'s no-fly zone.

Iraq is now required by the United Nations to provide a full and accurate declaration of its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs. We will judge the declaration's honesty and completeness only after we have thoroughly examined it, and that will take some time. The declaration must be credible and accurate and complete, or the Iraqi dictator will have demonstrated to the world once again that he has chosen not to change his behavior.

Americans seek peace in the world. War is the last option for confronting threats, yet the temporary peace of denial and looking away from danger would only be a prelude to a broader war and greater horror. America will confront gathering dangers early. By showing our resolve today, we are building a future of peace.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10 a.m. on December 6 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 7. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 6 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at the Kennedy Center Honors Reception

December 8, 2002

Welcome to the East Room of the White House. We are glad you're here. Laura and I are so pleased to join you in honoring the achievements of five great Americans. We welcome the honorees, and we welcome their families and friends who share the pride of this special day.

Each new group of Kennedy Center honorees presents a picture to remember. This year we've brought together in one room a legend of Broadway, the conductor of the Met, the composer of "Mrs. Robinson"—